

LESSON TITLE: HAZARDS**A. TRAINING OBJECTIVE**

- TASK:** Demonstrate knowledge of procedures to deal with traffic hazards.
- CONDITIONS:** Given instruction in a classroom.
- STANDARD:** Correctly answer verbal questions when called upon.

B. INTERMEDIATE TRAINING. None.**C. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Training time: Recommended instructional time is 0.5 hours.
2. Training location: Scheduled classroom.
3. Training type: Conference.
4. Students: Scheduled personnel.
5. Principal and assistant instructors required: One primary instructor for each class of 20 students.
6. Training aids and equipment: Overhead projector, transparencies, and screen.
7. References: FM 21-305.

D. SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITY**1. INTRODUCTION.**

a. **Interest Device.** In addition to you and your vehicle, one other major element, the environment (surroundings) affects your driving. Your surroundings include the roadway, weather, buildings, trees, hills, and the like. Living beings also must be recognized as part of the environment, with which you must deal. You must recognize and identify the nature of these different parts of your environment if you are to safely operate on the roadways.

b. **Tie-in.** If you do not fit in or blend with other roadway users and environmental features, there will be problems which can mean delays or accidents. Some of what you will see and interpret in your surroundings will be friendly and

some will be neutral. Unfortunately, some will be hazardous or dangerous. By recognizing all of this, you will be able to adjust your driving accordingly.

c. **Lesson Objective.**

ACTION: After this lesson the student will know the procedures to deal with traffic hazards.

CONDITIONS: Given instruction in a classroom.

STANDARD: Correctly answer verbal questions when called upon.

d. **Procedures.**

(1) *Explanation.*

(2) *Summary.*

2. **EXPLANATION.**

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a. **Seeing Hazards.**

(1) *Definition of a hazard.* A hazard is any road condition or other road user (driver, bicyclist, pedestrian) that is a possible danger. For example, a car in front of you is headed towards the freeway exit, but his brake lights come on and he begins braking hard. This could mean that the driver is uncertain about taking the off-ramp. He might suddenly return to the highway. This car is a hazard. If the driver of the car cuts in front of you, it is no longer just a hazard; it is an emergency.

(2) *Seeing hazards lets you be prepared.* You will have time to react if you see hazards before they become emergencies. In the example above, you might make a lane change or slow down to prevent a crash if the car suddenly cuts in front of you. Seeing this hazard gives you time to check your mirrors and signal a lane change. Being prepared reduces the danger. Sudden braking or a quick lane change is more likely to lead to a crash.

(3) *Learn to see hazards.* There are often clues that will help you see hazards.

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b. **Hazardous Roads.** Slow down and proceed with caution if you see any of the following road hazards:

(1) **Work zones.** When people are working on the road it is a hazard. There may be narrower lanes, sharp turns, or uneven surfaces. Other drivers are often distracted and drive unsafely. Workers and construction vehicles may get in the way. Drive slowly and carefully near work zones. Use 4-way flashers or brake lights to warn drivers behind you.

(2) **Drop off.** Sometimes the pavement drops off sharply near the edge of the road. Driving too near the road's edge can cause your vehicle to wander off the roadway. It may become difficult to steer as you cross the drop off or try to return to the highway. Here are some guidelines, if you do leave the road:

- Keep a firm grip on the steering wheel and keep the car traveling straight ahead.
- Straddle the edge of the pavement. You will need to fight the tendency of the wheels to pull toward the shoulder if it is soft. You also must resist the urge to immediately whip the vehicle back onto the pavement.
- Ease off the accelerator, allowing the car to slow gradually. Avoid braking, if possible, but if braking is necessary, use a gentle squeeze braking application, which will enable you to control steering.
- Move the off-road tires out about 1 1/2 to 2 feet away from the pavement edge.
- When it is safe and your speed is under control, turn the wheel quickly about a quarter turn to the left or right as necessary. The move permits the tire to climb the pavement edge and get back on the roadway.
- As soon as the front tires are back on the roadway, countersteer quickly to maintain your proper lane.

(3) **Foreign objects.** Things that have fallen on the road can be hazards. They can damage your tires, wheel rims, or electrical and brake lines. Some obstacles which appear to be harmless can be very dangerous. For example, cardboard boxes may be empty, but they may also contain some solid or heavy material capable of causing damage. The same is true of plastic trash bags or paper and cloth sacks. It is important to remain alert for objects on the highway. Recognize hazards early and avoid them without making sudden or unsafe moves.

(4) **Off-ramps/On-ramps.** Freeway and turnpike exits can be particularly dangerous for commercial vehicles. Off-ramps and on-ramps often have speed limit signs posted. Remember, these speeds are the maximum safe

speed for passenger cars and may not be safe for larger vehicles or heavily loaded vehicles. Exits which go downhill and turn at the same time can be especially dangerous. The downgrade makes it difficult to reduce speed. Braking and turning at the same time can be a dangerous practice. Make sure you are going slow enough to negotiate the curved part of an off-ramp or on-ramp.

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c. **Drivers Who are Hazards.** In order to protect yourself and others, you must anticipate actions of other drivers. Some clues to these types of hazards are discussed below:

(1) ***Blocked vision.*** Be alert for drivers whose vision is blocked. Vans, loaded station wagons, and cars with the rear window blocked are examples. Rental trucks should be watched carefully. Their drivers are often not use to the limited vision they have to the sides and rear of the trucks. In winter, vehicles with frost, ice, or snow covered windows are hazards.

(2) ***Blind intersections or alleys.*** Vehicles may be partly hidden by blind intersections or alleys. If you only can see the rear or front end of a vehicle but not the driver, then the driver cannot see you. Always be prepared to maneuver around them or stop.

(3) ***Delivery trucks.*** Delivery trucks can present a hazard. The driver's vision is often blocked by packages or vehicle doors. Drivers of step vans, postal vehicles, and local delivery vehicles often are in a hurry and may suddenly step out of their vehicle or drive their vehicle into the traffic lane.

(4) ***Parked vehicles.*** Parked vehicles can be hazards when the people start to get out. Or, they may suddenly start up and drive into your path. Watch for movement inside the vehicle or movement of the vehicle. Watch for brake lights or backup lights, exhaust, and other clues that a driver is about to move.

(5) ***Stopped buses.*** Be careful of a stopped bus. Passengers may cross in front of or behind the bus, and they often cannot see you. Approach stopped school buses and bus stops with extreme caution because of the additional danger of small children.

(6) ***Pedestrians and bicyclists.*** Pedestrians and bicyclists can also be hazards. Walkers, joggers, and bicyclists may be on the road with their back to the traffic, so they cannot see you. Sometimes, they wear portable stereos with head sets, so they cannot hear you either. On rainy days,

pedestrians may not see you because of hats or umbrellas. They may be hurrying to get out of the rain and may not pay attention to the traffic.

(7) ***Distractions***. People who are distracted are hazards. If they are looking elsewhere, they cannot see you. Be alert even when they are looking at you. They may believe that they have the right of way. Some examples of this are drivers reading newspapers or magazines, talking on a cellular telephone or CB, putting on makeup, and so on.

(8) ***Children***. Children tend to act quickly without checking traffic. Children playing with one another may not look for traffic.

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(9) ***Talkers***. Drivers or pedestrians talking to one another may not be paying close attention to the traffic.

(10) ***Workers***. People working on or near the roadway are a hazard clue. The work creates a distraction for other drivers and the workers themselves may not see you.

(11) ***Vendors***. Vendors include ice cream trucks and sidewalk vendors. People seem to forget there is other traffic when they deal with a neighborhood street vendor. They run or walk across roadways without considering other vehicles. Someone selling ice cream is also a hazard clue. Children may be nearby and may not see you.

(12) ***Disabled vehicle***. Drivers changing a tire or fixing their vehicle often do not pay attention to the traffic. Jacked up wheels or raised hoods are hazard clues.

(13) ***Accidents***. Accidents are particularly hazardous. People involved in the accident may not look for traffic. Passing drivers tend to look at the accident. People often run across the road without looking. Vehicles in your path may slow or stop suddenly.

(14) ***Shoppers***. People in and around shopping areas are often not watching traffic because they are looking for stores or looking into store windows.

(15) ***Confused drivers***. Confused drivers often change direction suddenly or stop without warning. Confusion is common near freeway or major intersections. Tourists unfamiliar with the area can be very hazardous. Clues to tourists include car top luggage and out-of-state license plates. Unexpected actions (stopping, changing lanes, back-up lights suddenly

going on) are clues to confusion. Hesitation is another clue, including driving very slowly, using brakes often, or stopping in the middle of an intersection. You may also see drivers who are looking at street signs, maps, and house numbers. These drivers may not be paying attention to you.

(16) ***Slow drivers.*** Motorists who fail to maintain normal speed are hazards. Seeing slow moving vehicles early can prevent a crash. Some vehicles by their nature are slow and seeing them is a hazard clue (mopeds, farm machinery, construction machinery, tractors, and so on). Some of these may display the “slow moving vehicle” symbol. This is a red triangle with an orange center. Watch for it.

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(17) ***Drivers signaling a turn.*** Drivers signaling a turn may be a hazard. They may slow more than expected or even stop. If they are making a tight turn into an alley or driveway they may go very slow. If they are blocked by pedestrians or other vehicles they may have to stop on the roadway. Vehicles turning left may have to stop for oncoming vehicles.

(18) ***Drivers in a hurry.*** Drivers may feel your vehicle is preventing them from getting where they want to go on time. These drivers may pass you without a safe gap in the oncoming traffic, cutting too close in front of you. Drivers entering the road may pull in front of you in order to avoid being stuck behind you, causing you to brake. Watch for drivers who are in a hurry.

(19) ***Impaired drivers.*** Drivers who are sleepy, have had too much to drink, on drugs, or who are ill are hazards. Some clues to these drivers are:

- Weaving from one side of the road to the other or drifting.
- Leaving the road (dropping right wheels onto the shoulder or bumping across a curb in a turn).
- Stopping at the wrong time (stopping at a green light or waiting too long at a stop light or sign).
- Open windows in cold weather.
- Speeds up or slows down suddenly, driving too fast or too slow.

(20) ***Driver body movement.*** Body movement may a clue. Drivers look in the direction they are going to turn. You may sometimes get a clue from a driver’s head and body movements that a driver may be going to make a turn even though the turn signals are not on. Drivers making over-the-shoulder checks may be going to change lanes. These clues are most easily

seen in motorcyclists and bicyclists. Watch other road users and try to anticipate their actions.

(21) **Conflicts.** You are in conflict when you have to change speed and/or direction to avoid hitting something. Conflicts occur at intersections where vehicles meet, at merges (such as turnpike on ramps), and where there are needed lane changes. Other situations include slow moving or stalled vehicles in a traffic lane and accident scenes. Watch other drivers who are in conflict. When they react to this conflict, they may do something that will put them in conflict with you.

3. SUMMARY.

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- a. **Recap Main Points.** Call on students to answer questions presented on Transparency 4-131.
- b. **Allow for Questions.**
- c. **Clarify Questions.**
- d. **Give Closing Statement.** You should always be looking for hazards. Learn to recognize hazards on the road. However, do not forget why you are looking for the hazards. They may turn into emergencies. Look for hazards in order to have time to plan a way out of an emergency. When you see a hazard, think about the emergencies that could develop and figure how to avoid it. Always be prepared to take action based on your plans. You need to be a prepared, defensive driver for not only your own safety but the safety of others.

E. SAFETY RESTRICTIONS. None.

F. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION. None.